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INFO ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE
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SIPDIS
STATE FOR NEA/ARP
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SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION

1. SUMMARY: Omani media this week concentrated on the formation of the new Israeli government and the upcoming Arab summit in Doha. Government Arabic daily "Oman" commented that Israel has the ability to move forward the peace process, but prospects are slight assuming new settlement activity. "Oman" on March 29 said that support of Sudan is the most important issue of the upcoming Arab summit. On March 30, "Oman" expressed the need for Arab reconciliation at the Arab summit, particularly given the challenges posed by a right-wing government in Israel. END SUMMARY.

DEVELOPMENTS DEPEND ON THE NEW ISRAELI GOVERNMENT

2. On March 28, government Arabic daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) commented that positive progress in the peace process will be largely determined by Israel's new government, but that government will likely support settlement expansion. According to "The Need to Deal Carefully with Many Signals in the Region":

"As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu looks to complete the formation of his government, the involvement of the Israeli Labor Party may not change the government's overall direction. It is not a coincidence that Netanyahu and Lieberman, a candidate for Foreign Minister, have hinted at the continuation of settlement activity in Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank. We can also assume that the U.S. will not put pressure on Israel because of the peace process. Positive developments in the region depend on the next Israeli government and its willingness to work for a peaceful settlement with the Palestinians."

SUDAN REQUIRES SERIOUS TREATMENT BY ARABS

3. Government daily "Oman" on March 29 commented that Sudan and Iraq are the most important issues on the table at the Doha summit, stating that the Arab nations' stance on President al Bashir will have an important impact. According to "The Necessity of Activating Arab Support for Sudan and Iraq":

"The ICC arrest warrant of President al Bashir and developments in Iraq are the key issues in the Doha summit. The situation in Sudan requires serious treatment by Arabs, especially since the Arab world's position will impact those developments. Regarding Iraq, Arab nations' frequent visits and contact, which conveyed support for Iraq's efforts, demonstrate a new phase in which Iraq can regain its vital and positive role in the region."

ARAB DIFFERENCES NEED TO BE OVERCOME

¶4. "Oman" on March 30 said that Arab reconciliation at the Doha summit is required given the specter of a right-wing Israeli government. "Doha Summit and the Need for Arab Reconciliation" said:

"Arab leaders are hoping that the Doha summit will resolve their differences and fulfill the hopes of Arab citizens. Arab differences need to be overcome for two reasons: first, because the new right-wing Israeli government is not interested in a peace process; second, because we must follow the initiative of U.S. President Barack Obama. Dialogue and communication are the ways to opening doors and to overcoming differences, including the differences that have lasted for 30 years with Iran. If this trend continues, perhaps Arab countries can overcome their differences as well."

GRAPPO